

# Newsletter

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Blissymbolics  
Communication  
Foundation







BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION

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The purpose of this Newsletter is to publish articles and news items concerning Blissymbolics which utilizes visual symbols as an augmentative to communication. The many applications of Blissymbolics include the following:

- 1) Communication Difficulties
- 2) Cognitive and Language Development
- 3) Reading
- 4) International Communication

SUBSCRIPTIONS:      \$ 6.00 per annum.      Available from:  
  
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ARTICLES:      Readers are encouraged to contribute articles in order to share their symbol experiences.      Send to:  
  
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### EDITORIAL

This issue contains programme information and ideas from around the world - Canada, United States, Australia, England and Saudi Arabia. I hope you find it interesting and informative. Thanks are extended to those who wrote to us sharing their thoughts and experiences with Blissymbolics.

Jane Green has written a humorous piece on the first workshop held in Newfoundland. It was obviously a great success as evidenced by Ann Kennedy's comments and excellent press coverage.

In an earlier issue I mentioned that Shirley McNaughton first came across a reference to Blissymbolics in "an old library book". I must retract that statement as Elizabeth Helfman's book is by no means "old" and contains much useful information pertinent to non-verbal communication. Miss Helfman has retained her interest in Blissymbolics and we hope to publish some of her experiences with signs and symbols in a later issue. For further information on Miss Helfman's book, see Shirley McNaughton's article on Signs and Symbols Around the World.

Zita Bevan writes from England telling of her initial hesitancy with symbols, later supplanted by enthusiasm when the programme proved its worth. Blissymbolics has moved quickly into the adult field and Ron Rizzo's client studies will be of great interest to those working with adult symbol users.

Instruction for the mentally retarded presents an enormous challenge. Arthur Leiman from Michigan informs us of his difficulties with this application. The B.C.F., is well aware of the challenge and held a Special Interest Workshop on Blissymbolics for the Mentally Retarded last July. Watch for availability of workshop proceedings in the Bulletin. It should be mentioned that all instructors of the mentally retarded are encouraged to attend such special interest workshops. In the meantime, the Newsletter would like to hear from subscribers experienced with symbol instruction for the retarded who would be willing to share their experiences with Arthur and the rest of us. It is true that the Newsletter "is replete with success stories", yet many individual programmes are abandoned for a variety of reasons. So let us hear of the failures as well as successes.

Included in this issue are two very helpful articles on language assessment and testing. Joan Hurren provides a list of appropriate test materials and Caroline Price's bibliography of language titles contains suggestions for further reading.

Information on electronic aids for the severely handicapped has been received from the Prentke Romich Company. When the 512-vocabulary is available for commercial use, the company will produce a Bliss Symbol Scanner for same. The Newsletter would be pleased to hear from those currently using the BSS-100.

Upon request, this issue reproduces the price list of material available from the B.C.F. Also included is an information sheet on books and films concerning Blissymbolics.

In conclusion, entertaining ideas for symbol games are submitted by Trish Bailey, Joan Hambly, Joan Hurren, and Mrs. H. D. Hryharow.



I regret to announce to readers the sudden death of Henry Bliss this past summer. Those of us who have viewed the movie "Mr. Symbol Man" many times came to know this gentle man and to appreciate the support he gave to his brother, our own Charles Bliss. I am sure that all subscribers join with me in sending sincere condolences to Charles.

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As many of you know, Barbara Kates has left the B.C.F. office in Toronto and now resides in Ottawa. Although working three days a week at the Ottawa Crippled Children's Centre providing full psychological services, she remains a consultant with B.C.F., working one day a week on various projects as they evolve. These projects include:

- local B.C.F. workshops
- Internship programme in the Ottawa area
- Adult symbol programmes
- National Research Council participation
- Compilation of relevant articles from back-dated Newsletters

It's good to know Barbara is still with the B.C.F. I always think of her and Shirley McNaughton as a team, like "Tom and Jerry" - can't think of one without the other!

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#### News in Brief

- "Mini-Bliss" is now available from the B.C.F. It is a much smaller version of the 400 vocabulary and is to be used on a trial basis by those who have developed an assortment of communication tools and who are prepared to provide on-going evaluation.
  - For a fee of \$ 5.00 per year, readers may become associate members of the B.C.F. This fee includes a subscription to the Bulletin which contains all the latest information on the activities of the B.C.F., including workshops.
  - Trish Bailey reports that Blissymbolics Workshops in Britain are proving to be a great success. The July course was so heavily over-subscribed, that another was immediately set for November. It, too, was full to capacity by August and a further workshop is planned for February!
  - The September, 1977, issue of the Canadian "Reader's Digest" contained an interesting article on Charles Bliss and the symbol system. It's well worth reading.
  - Keila Waksvik's crew in Montreal are developing a Roll-o-Bliss and Optical Pointer (head-light). The latter is presently being redesigned to permit individual fitting of the headgear within clinical settings, as well as the addition of a typing rod to allow for written communication. Felt pens, paint brushes, etc., can be attached to the typing rod for artistic and academic purposes. Ten Optical Pointers should be produced by November ready for field testing.
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Should you be interested in a particular article and wish to correspond with the author, please remember that you may do so by addressing your enquiry to the author c/o the B.C.F. in Toronto.



The Winter issue will be available in February and I would ask that articles for same be sent to me by January 15th, 1978. Please write - let us have your opinions, criticisms and suggestions. This is one way we can help each other.

Barbara Rush  
Editor

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NEWS FROM NEWFOUNDLAND - OUR FIRST ELEMENTARY WORKSHOP - MAY 1977

By - Jane Green  
Newfoundland

Now that our first Elementary Workshop is behind us I can see that I was wrong - wrong in thinking that all would be plain sailing from now on, with thirty-nine other people in the Province able to teach Bliss symbols. Obviously, it was just the start of something much bigger.

I have jotted down a few notes about how we came to have a workshop in case they may help others who are contemplating one in their area.

In April 1975 a small multi-disciplinary team from St. John's went up to O.C.C.C. to attend an Elementary Workshop on Bliss Symbols. There was an occupational therapist, Brenda Head, a physiotherapist, Daphne MacLean, from the Children's Rehabilitation Centre, and a teacher, me, from Virginia Waters School. On our return from this significant week, Bliss symbols began to be introduced - to three children in the school - and to some children as they visited the Centre from far-flung parts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Then in the summer of 1976 Daphne entered medical school and Brenda took her skills to Scotland. However, they passed the torch on in the Centre, and when Virginia Waters School opened in September I found two enthusiastic people, Winnie McNicol, speech therapist, and Evie McAuliffe, occupational therapist, anxious to learn all they could about Bliss.

At the same time, sparks were lighting small fires of interest all over the Province - some from those who had met and been impressed by the change in the symbol users; some from those who had seen 'Mr. Symbol Man' on T.V. or at the special showing we had held in September 1975; a child arrived in Newfoundland with symbols from Ontario; a therapist had worked in a setting where they were used; a parent had a relative who knew about them, and so on. Enquiries were coming in steadily, and recorded. It was evident that the time had come to have our own workshop. We wrote off to Toronto.

In January 1977 we had a telephone call from B.C.F. It was Ann Kennedy asking whether early May would suit us for an Elementary Workshop. 'Yes' was the instinctive answer - before official permission was granted or ways and means considered. This Workshop had to be and if I could give advice to anyone finding themselves in a similar position it is that if you are convinced that it will and must take place, then the impetus provided will help override the difficulties ahead. We booked rooms for the B.C.F. team at Hotel Newfoundland. The deal was on.



The biggest difficulty was, of course, money. This was to be the first four-day workshop and the charges had gone up considerably since Halifax had had their elementary workshop in November. Added to this was the fact that if we were to serve the whole Province people would have to travel a fair distance. We didn't even admit to each other that May is the worst month of the year in Newfoundland for fog! The first reactions we received from administrators and possible participants whom we tentatively approached had the same ring - 'You're mad. You can't possibly get forty people who can pay \$160 and get four days off work'.

A good selling job was imperative. However, we were fortunate to have already the support of Mr. Breen, the Administrator at the Children's Rehabilitation Centre, and the blessing of Dr. Tracey, the Chairman of Virginia Waters School Board. We approached the executive secretary of the Association of Hospital Administrators. He promised not only to do the mailing to the hospitals but also write a covering note recommending the workshop. Similarly at the Department of Education we were given mailing privileges and support in contacting the School Boards.

We sat down to design a catchy cover for the information going out about the workshop. We sent a large initial mailing to all the names we had collected, to key people at the University, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, School Boards, Hospitals, and individuals we knew who might be working with non-verbal people, enclosing information about Bliss symbols including a facsimile of a 100 symbol chart, information about B.C.F. itself, a tentative agenda sent us by Ann, - and our catchy cover.

By this time Mrs. Crosbie had joined Winnie, Evey and myself on the Committee. She had offered to be in charge of catering. I must confess that we did not find the initial financial proposals from B.C.F. very clear, but then the four of us were anything but financial wizards. We made several phone calls to B.C.F. which invariably calmed us down and gave us new courage at the same time. We had made the mistake of thinking that we could cut the registration fee, not wanting to make a profit. B.C.F. suggested that we make it clear that our Committee was sponsoring all participants to the tune of \$25 so that the fee remain standardised throughout the country. This we did. However, true to type, the apparent reduction of the fees from \$160 to \$135 finally convinced some people that they would be getting a bargain! I hasten to add that I am not advising others to make the same mistakes we did, just telling you like it was! Obviously now we had a big challenge ahead of us to break even. We sent off a large order for materials for participants, about \$1100 worth.

One night there was a meeting of the local chapter of the C.E.C. The President allotted me five minutes speaking time after the business. From that talk I got a sponsorship and eventually two participants. Other groups were approached such as the I.O.D.E. who sponsored the registration fee of a nurse in Happy Valley, Labrador and arranged for the International Grenfell Mission to pay her expenses. Beta Sigma Phi gave us a donation. The Department of Education would sponsor so many. The multidisciplinary group from the Rehab. Centre were to be sponsored by their Association. The teachers from Virginia Waters School were planning to raise their fees by having a garage sale when the Cerebral Palsy Association kindly donated the whole lot, enabling the teachers in their turn to sponsor somebody else. The numbers were creeping up.

Registration was not easy. The dead line was reached. We had a lot of promises and very little money. Were we getting the right people? We seemed to have a good spread of disciplines, teachers, speech therapists, O.T.'s and physios, nurses,



psychologists, two parents and a doctor. On the whole we were getting the people who would be really involved or those in a key position. We had people working with the aged and stroke victims as well as with the young. We regretted that the Children's Hospital were sending no-one, nor Exon House, the children's home. However, it was a matter for rejoicing to find that a Child Therapist from the latter was using his leave and paying his own way to come.

The majority came, as we expected, from the St. John's area but there was a good deputation from the West Coast, two or three from Central Newfoundland and one from Labrador. We were also pleased to have a request for a place from Fredricton, New Brunswick.

We then began to find that we were in danger of going above the ceiling of forty! There were some awkwardnesses when people assumed their place was booked but had not got their registration form and money in on time, and others had taken their place.

Mrs. Crosbie was swinging into action. Versa Foods offered to provide free coffee and tea twice a day for the four days. She rallied her friends and also herself to make all kinds of cookies, bread, desserts, Quiche Lorraine, macaroni cheese, for the lunches. The ingredients were to be the only cost. Incidentally, on finding there was a continuing strike at the hospital initially chosen as the site of the workshop, we had found even better facilities just across the road from Hotel Newfoundland belonging to St. Thomas' Church, where we had a great welcome.

The day was getting nearer and the materials had not yet arrived. The truth was they were lost. The truck in which they had travelled by road from Toronto was diverted mistakenly to a docks' warehouse in St. John's. It was finally located on the morning of the day the Team were to arrive. C.N. were persuaded to halt operations on the dockside and get the truck out, and the trucking firm were told they must leave all other work and get this truck unloaded. Luckily, I still knew just how good the workshop was going to be!

The sun shone and Barbara Kates, Ann Kennedy and Marjorie Buchanan were actually here, bringing with them visitors from Sweden, Wales and Australia. Suddenly we all knew - it was going to be a great and memorable week.

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#### A B.C.F. RESPONSE TO NEWFOUNDLAND WORKSHOP

By - Ann Kennedy  
Toronto

I've just read with great interest and emotion the report by Jane Green on the Newfoundland Workshop. As one of the group that went from Toronto, I felt I couldn't let it go by without adding a few words of my own.

We were a very large group coming from Toronto; Barb Kates, Marjorie Buchanan and myself from the B.C.F., plus Joan Hurren and her husband Bert from Australia, Ena Davies, National Advisor of the U.K. Blissymbolics Communication Resource Center, and our Swedish guests, who had been with us for the internship programme, Kerstrin Lorstrom, Kerstin Webster, Britt Karlsson.



April had been a particularly strenuous month for the Toronto group; An Upgrading Workshop, Presentors Workshop, and Advanced Workshop, ending on Friday, April 29th. We left for Newfoundland the following Monday morning, more dead than alive!

The reception we were given by the committee in Newfoundland, and in fact by everyone, was overwhelming. Buoyed up by their enthusiasm, our exhaustion vanished. Even the problems of missing materials seemed minor when handled by Jane in her calm, reassuring way. As Workshop Co-ordinator, I had, in fact, been aware of some of the problems - low initial registration, possible fog, misplaced materials, but like Jane, I closed my mind to them, in the hope it would all somehow work out. Miraculously, and with hard work by Jane, Evie and Winnie, it did.

I feel the Workshop itself was most successful. As Jane mentioned, there was a wide range of disciplines represented. This always adds to a workshop, with a variety of points of view being expressed. It was evident all came eager to learn. The physical accomodation was excellent - a large parish hall - which lent itself to formal lectures, informal discussions, and with lots of tables, proper surface space for work groups. The adjoining kitchen greatly facilitated coffee and lunch breaks, and what lunches they were!

It was exciting to see the interest in symbols that had grown in Newfoundland, in the two years since Jane's own Elementary Workshop in Toronto. Elaine, her star symbol user, was a great asset to parts of the workshop. She eagerly joined in on the sessions on Strategies, and Creating New Symbols, as well as giving an interview with Barb Kates for a local TV programme.

For all of us though, the most memorable aspect of our trip to Newfoundland was the tremendous warmth and hospitality of the Newfoundlanders. We were wined, dined, and entertained as never before. A wonderful evening was spent at the brand new restaurant of Jane's daughter. Following a most enjoyable meal, we were treated to informal music and a sing song, led by Evie and Winnie.

It was the first trip to Newfoundland for us all. Speaking for myself, it won't be the last. Well done, Jane!

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PRESS COVERAGE - REPRODUCED FROM GANDER BEACON, MAY 18, 1977

By - Donna Barnes  
Beacon Staff Writer

Mr. Charles Hillier and Mrs. Daphne Watton of the Vera Perlin School and parent, Judy Cormier, recently returned from a week-long course in St. John's, where they took part in training sessions to prepare them to teach the Bliss method of non-verbal communication.

The Bliss method, already in use in Ontario schools, uses a series of symbols to aid the non-speaking person to communicate. The Symbol Communication Program is based on Blissymbolics, a visual symbol system created by Charles K. Bliss to serve as a medium for international communication. Through the efforts of the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre symbol communications team, the Blissymbols have been adapted and organized in displays providing three vocabulary levels through which the



young child can progress - expanding his communication potential by serving as either a supplement or substitute for speech.

Blissymbols provides a unique and consistent organization of symbols which has the capability of conveying every aspect of human experience.

Blissymbols provide the non-speaking child with his own way of talking! They are NOT intended as a substitute for the written word. They provide the child with a mode of communication through which he can receive his education - which will include reading, typing, spelling, whenever these skills are appropriate to the child's learning capabilities.

Blissymbols are not the answer for every non-speaking child. Speech therapy, picture boards, word boards, spelling boards, should all be thoroughly investigated and a professional assessment of each child's needs, capabilities and social environment should be made before deciding upon the most appropriate communication program for each child.

Mr. Hillier stresses the fact that this type of communication is not for every child, and a decision to use the Blissymbols should be made by one trained in determining this type of treatment.

The system is in use in the Virginia Waters School for Cerebral Palsy Children in St. John's, and the Wonderland School for the Handicapped in Corner Brook as well as the Vera Perlin School for the Handicapped here in Gander.

Mr. Hillier said that this type of training is not meant as a substitute for the speaking child, but it will help to release tension and frustration caused by not being able to express themselves.

Anyone interested in obtaining help for their non-speaking child may call the Vera Perlin School for further information.

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#### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS AROUND THE WORLD

By: Shirley McNaughton  
Toronto

During June, the symbol children and teachers at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, and I were delighted to have a visit from Mrs. Elizabeth Helfman, author of Signs and Symbols Around the World.<sup>1</sup> This book must be given the credit for the first application of Blissymbolics as a communication vehicle for the non-speaking child. In October 1971, while looking for ideas to assist our team in creating our own symbols, it was Elizabeth Helfman's book that gave us our first knowledge of the work of Charles K. Bliss.

From that early glimpse of "Bliss" there has been no turning back! It was a privilege for us to say thank you to this lovely lady for helping us discover a new way of talking.



Her book - "written for young people ages 12 and up and up" is recommended for anyone wishing to know more of visual symbol systems. It should be of special interest to Blissymbol users.

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<sup>1</sup> Helfman, E. Signs and Symbols Around the World. For Young People Ages 12 and Up and Up. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, (A Division of William Morrow and Co.), Distributed by Gage Educational Publishing Ltd., 164 Commander Road, Toronto.

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FROM "YES" AND "NO" TO "COMMUNICATE"

By: Zeta Bevan  
Middlesex, England

I have been co-ordinating the teaching of Blissymbols in our school, Martindale School for Physically Handicapped Children, since January of this year. Located in Hounslow, Middlesex, Martindale is a state school for children from 3-17 with a Further Education Department for young people from 17-19 not necessarily past pupils. We have 145 children, a Cerebral Palsy Medical Unit, a Physiotherapy Department, and a Speech Therapy Department. The children are all day pupils who are brought to school on special transport.

The idea of teaching Bliss at Martindale was started by Betty Ison the previous June. Betty left this school to become the head of a neighbouring one, and I took over her work in this field.

We now have 9 children using Bliss and we are thrilled with their progress. But, in particular, we are thrilled to be able to communicate so freely with kiddies who previously could only indicate "Yes" or "No". These are children with Cerebral Palsy who are unable to speak and have little controlled movement.

Two of the above children, (age 10), have very poor speech which only parents and teachers understand. At first they told me they did not want to learn Bliss as they could talk. I did not force the issue. I only said it would be a good idea if they knew how to use it so that they could talk to the other children who made no sounds. A month ago one child came and asked me for a chart to take on holiday so that they could talk to grandmother, and friends. Now the other child has asked me for one for "Brownie" nights, and for use at the Club.

At school we have a specialist teacher for the deaf who is using Bliss with a deaf cerebral palsy child and everyone is pleased with the child's progress, her parents are thrilled and the child will not be parted from her chart, and takes it to bed at night.

When Betty Chandorkar first told me about Blissymbolics I thought it rather gimmicky, but now I am "sold" on the idea and the children are so happy with it.

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CLIENTS IN OUR BLISSYMBOLICS PROGRAM UCP ADULT CENTER

DAYTON, OHIO

By: Ron Rizzo  
Dayton, Ohio

DAVID CA. - Age 21

David was normal until age four at which time he contracted dystonia and attended school until age eight. He was then taken out because there were no facilities to care for him. Dave continued his education by means of special tutors and individual reading materials furnished by his parents. He is capable of reading at a near college level. He is unable to speak at all, cannot stand or even sit in a wheelchair, therefore, he must remain lying down. In less than a month Dave mastered the 400 symbol chart. In fact, I would say that he knows it better than I do at this time.

He is extremely fast and accurate with its usage. Dave devised his own method of using the Bliss chart - he holds a stick in his mouth and points to the symbols. He is about three times faster this way.

I am in the process of testing and evaluating him to determine at what level he is functioning. Within a month after introducing Dave to the 400 symbol chart, he indicated to me that he had a question. As it turned out, he wanted a comparison between what the Bible says on the origin of man and what evolution says on the origin of man. Needless to say, I took him out to Wright State University to talk to a professor in the Religion Department in an attempt to answer that one for him.

That is just a idea as to how fantastic these symbols are. Dave had been more or less entertaining himself and living within himself by reading, listening to the radio, records, etc. but having no real inter-communication with other members of society.

The change in him is unbelievable; he talks to everyone about everything. Dave's parents were absolutely fascinated with his ability to communicate through the use of the symbols. They knew that he was pretty keen as far as being aware of things in the world, but had no means of communicating with him to find out just what was on his mind. Now they communicate with Dave as they do with their other children.

CHARLENE - Age 26

Three years high school formal education. Charlene is completely non verbal. She can write a little but she does so with some difficulty. She also has a bit of a problem with spelling.

In the past she had used an alphabet board and also wrote out questions or statements as to what she wanted. But this did not seem to be adequate for her as both systems were much too slow and she very seldom used them and resorted to "guessing games" instead.

After one day of introducing Charlene to Blissymbolics she was pushing away the 100 symbol chart and going straight to the 400 symbol chart. In order to find symbols to represent what she wants to talk about, Charlene can use the symbols but likes to take shortcuts. The greatest difficulty with her is getting her to follow a proper sequence of symbols. For example, if she wanted to say "I like you", she would point to "I - you - like" because the "I" and the "you" are close together. We have been working on this to make her go back and do it properly.



Charlene has not yet progressed to the point of using some of the other symbols such as the symbol for "sounds like" and "combine", etc. She tends to take all shortcuts to let us carry on with the guessing games type procedure. I feel however, that this is a very minor problem as she is capable of communicating and does so constantly since we presented her with a chart to use.

Her parents had been taking her for granted and playing the guessing games with her as they were able to understand pretty well what she wanted. However, after they found out how many more conversations she could join in on, they were really fascinated by the Blissymbolics.

ROBIN J. - Age 31

Has had some elementary school. According to Robin's parents he has at one time or other tried about everything on the market for talking, to no avail. Robin is not very good at spelling, therefore the alphabet board has not been very successful with him in the past. Nor has a word board succeeded as he knows only the words he is familiar with on the board and even then has difficulty in pointing to the words as he is extremely spastic. Robin has been my greatest challenge because of these points.

I have made some headway with Bliss but the difficulty arises with the small size of the blocks with the 400 symbol chart. In an attempt to overcome this I broke the chart down into six sections simply by making the lines darker and wider to section it off. Robin can then use his entire hand to point to a particular section. I then run my finger down one side until I reach the row which contains the symbol and then across until I reach the symbol. This means there are only four or five rows that have to be concentrated on rather than across the entire chart. This seems to work quite a bit better for him.

I have been having difficulty in breaking his habit of wanting to do the pointing. A head pointer isn't feasible with Robin either because his head movement isn't steady enough to point to individual symbols. I thought about the possibility of using the chart with the numbers for eye usage but I don't have these available for use as yet so I have been doing the best I can with this other method.

GARY M. - Age 32

Grade three education; can read very little. Gary has a very short attention span. He can use the chart much better when trying to tell something to someone else, rather than just making up a sentence then trying to point it out on the chart as you would for a practice session.

VIRGINIA B. - Age 46

Grade three education. Virginia can speak but she is very hard to understand. She has a great need to help other people and I involved her with Blissymbolics to supplement her speech for someone not used to hearing her talk and also to help her fulfill this need. She is quite slow at learning and I don't believe she will ever reach a "helping" point but Bliss is beneficial to her and keeps her happy and active.



MARY CAROL B. - Age 31

Has had no formal schooling. Mary Carol is unable to read, but can say a few sentences. I compiled a book of pictures with corresponding symbols for Mary Carol and it seems to be working out quite well. Mary Carol is capable of recognizing what a picture represents and tying it together with the proper symbol.

However, the most surprising progress I have made with her is that the attention she is getting from working with the symbols has stimulated her interest in talking. Her mother reports Mary Carol is talking much more at home than she has in the past and I have noticed this to be true here at the UCP Adult Center also. At times I work with all our non verbals in a group using the book with the picture symbols association method, and when I point to a picture and ask what it represents, Mary Carol often responds verbally what would be the symbol meaning which is great as long as communication is established. She is very slow in accepting the chart itself and working with it, but it has stimulated her talking aloud which is really better than with the symbols.

DAVID CU. - Age 21

Has high school education. Dave can speak, but is very difficult to understand. He uses the 400 symbol chart, and helps me teach Bliss to the others. I have taught him the theory and meaning of base symbols and how symbol parts go together to form meanings and he is quite good at it.

The clients tend to resent his teaching them as they feel he is a client the same as they are and they do not like to pay attention to what he has to say. Therefore, I frequently break in to "restimulate" interest. I don't know if this will be a beneficial move or not. Dave also loses patience with the other clients when they don't recognize the symbol previously covered. I am hoping to teach Dave to have patience while teaching Blissymbolics to the others. It is too soon to claim success or failure with this system as yet.

### SUMMARY

All in all Blissymbolics seems to be a great success here at the Adult Activity Center. I cover Bliss two days a week, three hours each day. This time is split up between the clients - some on an individual basis, some in group work. I also give fun type homework to do, for instance, writing a joke in symbols and having them either interpret it or respond with symbols. The most important thing that I have found with adults in teaching Blissymbolics is that the subject matter must be at an adult level. Even though they might not have had formal education to any extent they have still lived within the adult world and are aware of things around them that they relate to as adults. They definitely do not like anything presented as in a school. Instead, they prefer to use the chart to discuss matters of interest to them. A method particularly successful is to have them in a group such as a therapy group and discuss matters of concern to them at the time. It seems they like to show their skill with the chart, while entering into the conversation. They tend to use the chart for funny comments and cracking jokes like the other members of the group, also discussions on sex draws their interest immediately.

I am extremely impressed with Blissymbolics. It is absolutely fascinating to watch a person change from being unable to express himself to a person who is impossible to shut up. It seems they want to get everything out at once, everything that has been stored up for years.



BLISSYMBOLICS AND THE MENTALLY RETARDED

By: Arthur Leiman, M.A.  
Northville, Michigan

As a speech pathologist in Northville Residential Training Center, I often become somewhat discouraged as I read of the enormous success communication therapists are having with their clients. However, Bliss Symbols for the mentally retarded present more of a challenge for the therapist. Our residents often have visual problems, which preclude recognition of similar symbols. Residents often display recognition in the Language Laboratory but do not resort to employing them in their environment. Furthermore, the intellectual impairment itself has a large limitation on the resident's ability to understand the symbols. Therefore, it is not surprising for a communication therapist to feel discouraged as the Newsletter is replete with success stories.

In order to facilitate symbol generalization, it was decided to teach Bliss Symbols to our verbal residents. This procedure will accomplish two things:  
1) The verbal residents will eventually learn to read, and 2) The non-verbal residents will be able to communicate more effectively with their verbal friends. The concept of using Bliss Symbols as an intermediate step to reading is advocated by BCF. As a result, we wanted to start using Bliss Symbols for the verbal residents as a means of reading. Eventually, our residents will be placed in the community at half-way houses and foster homes. It is our hope to inform these facilities about Bliss Symbols and to post signs in Bliss Symbols as well as in English.

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A REVIEW - "LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES"

APPENDIX A IN COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Edited by Lyle L. Lloyd, Uni. Park Press Baltimore, 1976

By: Joan Hurren  
Australia

If you are beginning a programme with help from "Teaching Guidelines, B.C.F.", you will have been confronted with a list of factors for consideration before deciding whether symbols are appropriate. These facts having been based on observations of children referred to the O.C.C.C. Communication Assessment Conference.

If you have attended an Elementary Workshop, the Initial Assessment is discussed in detail e.g. The Primary Factors which determine the means of communication and the Secondary Factors which will influence the programme.

An assessor would be required to have a collection of suitable tests and I was pleased to find a selection in this very interesting book.

The appendix provides a valuable source of test materials which are either described in the literature or are available commercially.

The name and address of the publisher, the purpose of the test and a brief description which includes age level, task, administration, scoring and standardization, reliability and validity, is given.



The following is a list of the tests described: -

"Assessment of Children's Language Comprehensions"

(ACLC; 1969, 1973)

Rochana Foster, Jane Giddan and Joel Stark

"The Basic Concept Inventory" (BCI; 1967)

Siegfried E. Engelmann

"Berry-Talbott Exploratory Test of Grammar" (1966)

Mildred Berry and Ruth Talbott

"Boehm Test of Basic Concepts" (BTBC; 1969, 1971)

Forms A and B; Spanish Edition Available

Ann Boehm

"Carrow Elicited Language Inventory" (CELI; 1974)

Elizabeth Carrow

"Comprehension Tests for Syntactic Constructions" (1971)

Ursula Bellugi-Klima

"Developmental Sentence Analysis" (DSA; 1974)

Laura Lee

"Full Range Picture Vocabulary Test" (FRVT; 1948)

Forms A and B

Robert A. Ammons and Helen S. Ammons

"The Houston Test of Language Development" (HTLD; 1958, 1963)

Margaret Crabtree

"Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities" (ITPA; 1961, 1968)

Samuel A. Kirk, James J. McCarthy and Winifred D. Kirk

"The Miller-Yoder Test of Grammatical Comprehension"

Experimental Edition (M-Y Test, 1972)

Jon Miller and David Yoder

"Northwestern Syntax Screening Test" (NSST; 1969, 1971)

Laura Lee

"Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test" (PPVT; 1959, 1965)

Lloyd M. Dunn

"The Parsons Language Sample" (PLS; 1963)

Joseph E. Spradlin

"Porch Index of Communicative Ability in Children" (PICAC; 1974)

Bruce E. Porch

"Pre-school Language Scale" (PLS; 1969)

Irla L. Zimmerman, Violette G. Steiner and Roberta L. Evatt

"Test for Auditory Comprehension of Language" (1968, 1973)  
English/Spanish Versions  
Elizabeth Carrow

"Utah Test of Language Development" (VTLD; Revised Edition, 1967)  
Merlin J. Mechem, J. Lurin Jex and J. Dean Jones

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By: Caroline Price  
Atlanta, Georgia

KEY

1. Clinical Research
  - a) Animal
  - c) Child
2. Assessment; scales, instruments, tools
3. Infant Development - motor - sensory motor
4. Cognition
5. Language Theories
6. Grammar - Syntax - (Aquisition)
7. Speech Training approaches, programs
8. Language Training - expressive & receptive
9. Non-oral Communication Systems
10. Communication Theories
11. Equipment for the Multi-Handicapped

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### ELECTRONIC AIDS FOR THE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED

Prentke Romich Company is licensed by the Blissymbolics Communication Foundation to provide communication aids using Bliss symbols. These aids are available using the the 100 and 512 level vocabularies. A white plastic coated display mask is included with each unit, and extra masks can be ordered. The surface is suitable for marking with a grease pencil. The display area is 13" by 17". Either unit can be ordered with an optional built-in memory, or a separate plug-in memory unit can be added later. The memory permits storing up to 64 entries for rapid sequential display.

The effectiveness of a communication aid is a function of the match between control switch and user. Prentke Romich Company offers a number of standard control switches and can offer ideas and technical assistance if specials are required.

#### ROCKING LEVER SWITCHES RL-1 and RL-2

The Rocking Lever Switches are generally activated with gross hand or arm movements or with a mouthstick. They require about 30 grams (1 oz.) of force. The dimensions are 2" W x 4" L x 1½" H.

#### TONGUE SWITCH TS - 2

The Tongue Switch is mounted on a 19" flexible gooseneck, clamp bracket and ball and socket swivel for easy positioning. The switch is inside a 1" x 2" x 3" plastic box and is generally operated using tongue or lips, requiring about 15 grams (½ oz.) of force.

#### PNEUMATIC SWITCH PS - 2

The Pneumatic Switch consists of a clamp bracket, 19" flexible gooseneck and replaceable mouthpiece. The mechanism is housed in a 2" x 3" x 4" box. Blowing activates one switch and sucking activates the other. Pressure or vacuum corresponding to about 4 cm. (1½") of water is required. Pushbuttons permit manual operation.

#### CHIN SWITCHES CS - 1 and CS - 2

Both the single and dual rocking lever switches are available mounted on a collar that can be worn. The switch can then be operated using the chin. The switch position is adjustable to accomodate users of various sizes.

#### ARM SLOT CONTROL ASX - 4

The Arm Slot Control was developed at the Children's Hospital at Stanford. It has four paddles arranged in an arc. When the user places his arm on a paddle, a switch is activated. Barriers between paddles prevent the arm from sliding off the paddle.

#### JOYSTICK

The Joystick is a convenient implementation of four switches. When used with a row-column scanner, the lights will scan in the direction the joystick has been pushed.



Additional information on the Bliss Symbol Scanner and other devices for the severely handicapped may be obtained from:

PRENTKE ROMICH COMPANY,  
R.D. 2, Box 191,  
Shreve, Ohio. 44676  
U.S.A.

### INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Order from: Blissymbolics Communication Foundation,  
862 Eglinton Avenue East,  
Toronto, Ontario. M4G 2L1

Teaching Guidelines (ENGLISH or FRENCH)  
Syntax Supplement No. 1  
Provisional Dictionary

\$ 4.00  
\$ 2.50  
\$ 2.50

IF ABOVE ITEMS PURCHASED AS GROUP OF THREE

\$ 8.50

\* \* \* \* \*

Set of 30 Individual Introductory Symbols  
100 Vocabulary Display  
200 Vocabulary Display  
400 Vocabulary Display

\$ 3.00  
\$ 4.00  
\$ 5.00  
\$ 6.00

IF ABOVE ITEMS PURCHASED AS GROUP OF FOUR

\$ 16.50

\* \* \* \* \*

Grammar Block 15" x 8"

\$ 2.00

SPECIMEN KIT (all 8 items listed above)  
(If vocabulary displays are in colour-coded)

\$ 26.00  
\$ 41.00

#### COLOUR - CODED DISPLAYS

100 Vocabulary display - colour coded  
200 Vocabulary display - colour coded  
400 Vocabulary display - colour coded

\$ 7.50  
\$ 10.50  
\$ 12.00

Portable Folding Case to hold Vocabulary displays \$ 7.00  
O.C.C.C. Symbol Communication Prog. Year End (1974) Report \$ 4.00  
"Symbol Secrets" - a book for children (S. McNaughton) \$ 6.00  
"The First Application of Blissymbolics.." (a paper) ENGLISH or FRENCH \$ 1.00  
"Considerations in Assessing a Child's Needs" (paper) \$ .75  
"Commercially Available and Teacher-Made Materials" paper (Claudia Chant) 1.00

MINIMUM HANDLING CHARGE FOR EACH ORDER..... \$ 2.00  
ALL POSTAGE COSTS EXCEEDING 50 cents WILL BE BILLED TO CUSTOMER.  
Prices subject to change without notice.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLOUR CODING ARE INCLUDED WITH ALL VOCABULARY DISPLAYS

BOOKS AND FILMS AVAILABLE

Books:

SEMANTOGRAPHY

\$ 28.00

BOOK TO THE FILM  
"MR. SYMBOL MAN"

\$ 5.00

Order directly from:

Charles K. Bliss,  
P.O. Box 222,  
Coognee, 2034,  
Sydney, Australia.

Films:

MR. SYMBOL MAN

A 16 mm. colour, optical sound film of  
Charles K. Bliss's work. Running time  
49 min. 7 sec.

U.S.A.

Mr. Myron Solin, President,  
Benchmark Films Inc.,  
145 Scarborough Road,  
Briarcliff Manor,  
New York, 10510.

Purchase Price \$ 494.00  
Rental Price \$ 60.00

Canada

Mr. George Lynes,  
National Film Board of Canada,  
550 Sherbrooke Street West,  
Montreal, Quebec.

or  
your local NFB Office

Purchase Price \$ 435.00  
Rental Price No Charge

SYMBOL BOY

A 16 mm. colour, animated line drawing  
film, using basic Blissymbolics vocabulary.  
5 min.

U.S.A.

Mr. Myron Solin, President,  
Benchmark Films Inc.  
(as above for Mr. Symbol Man)

Purchase Price \$ 120.00  
Rental Price \$ 18.00

Canada

National Film Board  
(as above for Mr. Symbol Man)

Purchase Price \$ 60.00  
Rental Price No Charge

Local Library may also have loan copies.



## SYMBOL GAMES

By Trish Bailey  
Fareham, England

Simple symbol games for use at 100 symbol level.

### Make A Man

Materials: a) One cube with body part symbols on each face - e.g. mouth, eye, ear, nose, legs, hand.

b) Printed sheets showing simple outline of a man - see below

Parts of the body  
to be completed  
are drawn in broken  
lines.



Rules: a) The cube is thrown. The symbol on top is drawn onto the picture.

b) If a symbol comes up on the dice and is not needed, then the player waits his next turn to throw again.

c) The first to complete a body is the winner.

This game can be made more complicated by using a dice and a key to complete the body, e.g.

1 = mouth  
2 = eye  
3 = legs

4 = nose  
5 = hand  
6 = ear

### Game for 200 Symbol Level

Aim: To teach and consolidate the concept of "opposite."

Materials: 1) Pictures and drawings of things which are opposite - old/young, lucky/unlucky.

2) Symbols (and words) to represent each of the pictures.

Put them all onto cards, preferably covered in clear plastic. Arrange into four sets as follows:

A) Pictures of adjectives on 200 display, e.g. long, dirty

B) Symbols of adjectives on 200 display, e.g.:

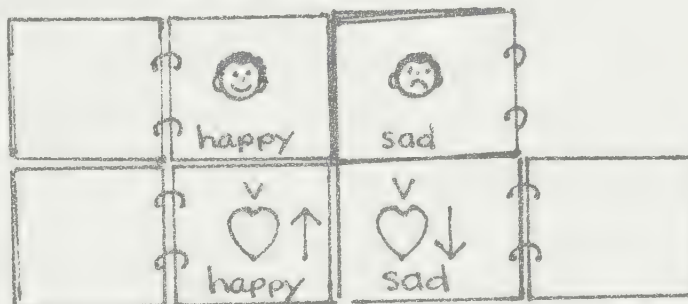
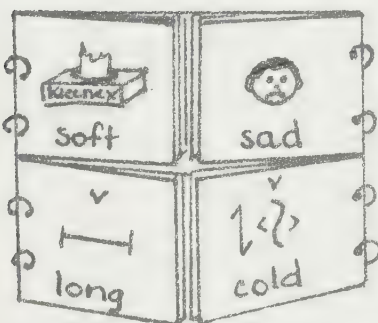


C) Pictures of opposites to those in A), e.g. short, clean

D) Symbols of opposites to those in A), e.g.:



Make holes in the cards and arrange into small books and attach to a strong card backing as shown below.



With this four in one book, pages can be turned until a set is found. If split rings are used for hinges, the cards can be used for other games when a little understanding has been reached.

### "Opposite" Snap

A version of the traditional game "Snap" can be played by declaring "Snap" if the cards turned up are opposites. This could consist of 2 pictures, 2 symbols, or a picture and a symbol.

### "Opposite" Memory Game (Concentration)

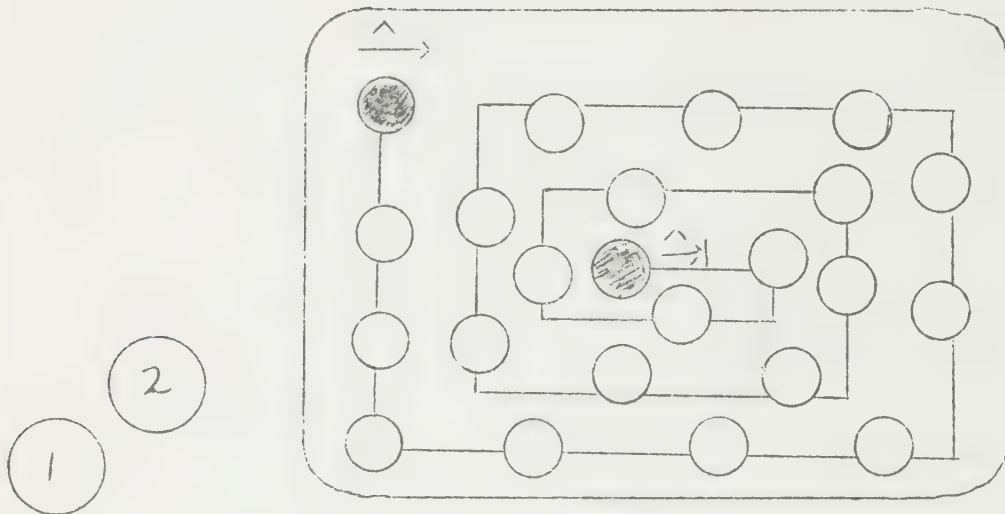
Using the same cards and the same idea, that is, pair made by cards with an opposite meaning, the memory game can be played.

It is useful to note that if using a 3 x 3 grid, 16 cards (4 sets) should be chosen. This keeps the game short and is within the concentration span of most children.



ROLL A SENTENCE

By: Joan Hambly  
Regina, Sask.

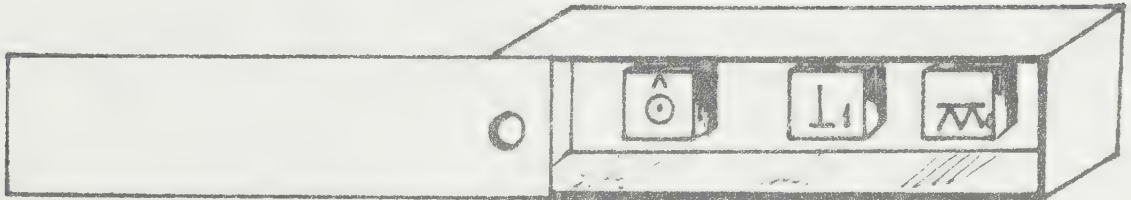
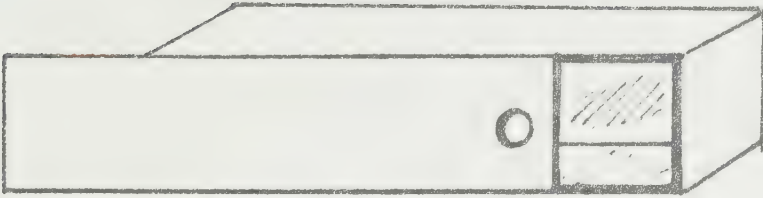
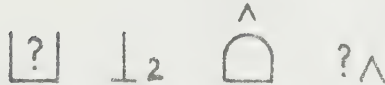


This game is dealing with syntaxing. I feel a symbol user needs a great deal of help in this area. Once again, I have tried to incorporate the use of the symbol user's fine motor skills.

- A) Materials - 1 large styrofoam dice with #3 - 6 around it.  
A board 3 ft. x 3 ft. On the board will be painted 24 round circles and on each circle is a magnet.  
Hat-faced circular styrofoam discs for each player. On the bottom of each disc is a magnet.  
Individually packed sentences in groups of 3-word sentences, 4-word sentences, 5-word -  
A minute egg-timer and a bell.
- B) Method - The user throws the dice. Example: The #4 appears. The user goes to the group of sentences with 4 words in them. He or she takes a package of 4 words and puts them out on the table. If you want this part can be timed. If the user can organize the words in a proper sentence structure then he or she moves 4 spaces (or whatever number of words they have been working with.) If the user cannot do it or gets it wrong and if his opponent can do it then they move ahead two spaces. If you are using the timer and the user doesn't know how to recognize the sentence then the opponent gets a try at it.
- C) Observation - The user gets an opportunity to try different types of sentences in a game situation; taking a dull atmosphere away from what could be a very structured learning situation.
- D) Conclusion - Learning can be fun even when there are physical difficulties.

BUILD A SENTENCE

By Joan Hambly  
Regina, Sask.



In this game I tried to incorporate the use of both physical and mental abilities of the symbol user.

- A) Objective - Correct syntaxing of sentences - any model can be used. To have the user physically attempt the game.
- B) Materials - An open-faced wooden box about three inches thick. The back is of magnetic material and the front is a sliding door with a very large handle.  
  
Blocks inside are styrofoam with magnets placed on the back and a symbol on the front.
- C) Method - User (either with or without help) must open the door. Inside they will find a confused set of blocks. With or without help they must reorganize the blocks so that they form a sentence.
- D) Observation - The user has the satisfaction of moving the parts of the sentence around to arrange them in their correct order. Unlike small pieces of paper, the blocks stay on the board, even when hit; therefore there is less frustration for the user.
- E) Conclusion - Aside from seeing the sentence corrected, the user can feel it being corrected. Also, their fine motor skills are put to use.



## GAMES FROM AUSTRALIA

By: Joan Hurren  
Canberra, Australia

Play Activity Games - to practice known vocabulary (symbols) and to learn new words (symbols) in a natural manner.

- e.g.
- a) Putting toys in a box
  - b) Dressing a doll
  - c) Put furniture in a doll's house
  - d) Packing a suitcase

These games may be introduced when child has only two known symbols. The theme is built around them. All objects should be identified as they are presented.

Example: If known vocabulary is "door" and "chair", the activity presented could be "Putting furniture in a doll's house."

Riddles - develop the child's ability to reason. The child's vocabulary should include some nouns (classifiers), - colours, size, shape and question forms.

- a) Conceal the object referred to.
- b) Use pictures, drawings, etc., to help clarify clues given (if necessary).

Examples: It's round     )  
          It's red       )     A ball  
          It bounces    )

          It's big             )  
          It's grey            )  
          It has 4 legs         )     An elephant  
          It has a long trunk )

### Ideas for Getting Children to Ask Questions

Use activities to arouse interest and curiosity.

Examples: A broken toy, a torn garment, a doll with bandage on leg/head, etc., incomplete picture stories, pictures of places, pictures of teacher's family (known and unknown people) etc.

Symbol Discrimination Game (Particularly for deaf children - need for constant repetition)

To be played by one child with adult or by several symbol users.

Materials:

Make a game board using 3 or 4 symbols (symbols can be changed as required).

Make separate cards that have the same symbols on them.

Tokens - the same number as symbols on the board.

### Method:

Teacher uses word in small sentence then shows child the four symbol cards. Child indicates the correct symbol used. Tokens are moved up the board until they reach the symbol at the top. The token may be edible; in which case it is eaten by child when the symbol is reached.

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### Lessons Typical for Deaf Children

A type of game that allows you to repeat one word or concept many times is - making a picture. This is the type of lesson game I would use with a deaf child.

As an example we will use "star".

Materials: A black or dark blue sheet of paper

- Cut out (a) yellow moon
- (b) a house
- (c) a tree or trees
- (d) a number of stars (10/15)

### Lesson:

Put black paper on board or child's tray, etc., - wherever he is used to you working with him (I would suggest an easel beside table).

Paste the shapes of the moon, house and tree on the picture, describing what you are doing. Show the symbols for each word as you talk about them.



I would then say "Here's a star," and paste it on. "Look at the star" - paste on another. "There are lots of stars" - paste on more. "You put a star in the sky" etc., until all the stars are on the picture.

This type of lesson game can be used for teaching "house" and parts of the house - door, window, chimney; body parts, etc.

For teaching deaf children, a camera is essential.

The following can be taught with the pictures you take. Match to the symbols.

Names and Relationships: All family members including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.,

All people with whom the child comes into regular contact - teacher, peers, therapists, etc.

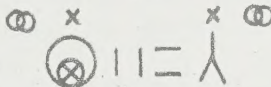
Time concepts: The Seasons - photograph the child in the same place during each season. This is an opportunity to teach and/or review temperature, clothing and activities suitable to the different seasons.

Special Occasions - Christmas, Easter, vacations and trips. Names can be reviewed through photographs and matched to symbols which will make them become more meaningful to the deaf child.

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NEWS FROM SAUDI ARABIA

Editor's Note: The following game has been submitted by a parent living in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, who will be moving shortly to Iran. Blissymbolics sure gets around! Mrs. Hryharow has a 7½ year old son, severely physically handicapped by cerebral palsy, yet completely fluent with the 400 vocabulary display. She tells with pride how he recently made up a story about



I have a 7½ year old student, Victor, also fluent with the 400, who was fascinated by this combination as he is now going through the "robot" stage. In addition, we recently studied the desert in school and he decided he would like to write to this young man. This he has done and I hope to share some of their correspondence with you in later Newsletters. One amusing story is that he has asked his pen-pal if he goes to school on a



(I think he chose



for its graphic property not semantic!)

Mrs. Hryharow also had an interesting request for a symbol display without words which would then provide space for the Arabic translation. This is a good idea for the BCF folk to consider. In my own setting we have used Portuguese, Spanish and Serbian translations so there must be quite a need world-wide.

.....

From: Mrs. H. D. Hryharow  
Saudi Arabia

This game, "GRabble", has provided many happy hours for my son and I and we would like to share it with others using these wonderful communication tools. The symbol is either drawn with permanent marking ink or painted on one side of a 3/4" stone tile - these are readily available at hardware stores, I believe, but any small square or rectangular piece would do. The symbol's "translation" can then be typed and glued beneath the symbol. The reverse side of each tile can be colour-coded easily. Each player is permitted to draw some tiles (we start with seven) and then makes the longest and/or best sentence that he can, using his own tiles and linking his sentence to the game by using one word from a pre-existing one.

This is, of course the way you play the Selchow and Righter Company's "Scrabble" - "Grabble is teaching Grammatical use of Blissymbolics. This company has made 3-dimensional playing boards for a version of its game which is no longer produced, and I have seen other 3-D plastic playing boards with 3/4" spaces, and these help to keep the tiles in order during play.

Scoring, of course, will depend upon what's being taught at the time. We are giving one point for each word used in a good sentence, used correctly. This means that points could also be won by additions which extend or change the meaning of previously played sentences. The tiles could also be made with either the word or symbol on them, and then points given for putting both tiles in one position, either when they are first played or later in the game as "extra-credit" points for the player who adds the second tile to a previously played symbol or word.

I shall renew my Newsletter subscription as soon as our move to Iran is finalized since keeping myself informed about the progress of this system means so much to us. It is very well thought out and I look forward to each issue. Please tell Russell Cecchini that his letter (see Volume 3, #3) was not only interesting to read with my boy, but useful too, for teaching the importance and correct use of "combine" symbol to a child who does not go to school and uses his symbols only when communicating with adults.





